

BK TODAY

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The Official News Bulletin of the Building Services Department

Allison: The Morning After



Inside City Hall Annex garage, Inspector Joe Davis, BSD Director Monique McGilbra and Chief Engineer Philip Golembiewski confer with McCrory Engineering's Don B. McCrory and Jim May. Below and right, Buffalo Bayou engulfs the CHA garage. Photos courtesy of Ted Low and Carletta Dirden.



The weekend of June 9-10, 2001 will long be remembered in the City of Houston. Tropical Storm Allison dumped between 35-40 inches of rain on Harris County and the surrounding area, almost this region's total annual rainfall.

Expecting the worse, Building Services employees moved into action June 8 when pool vehicles were relocated from level P-2 to P-1 in the City Hall Annex garage. It would be in vain.

Level P-2 began flooding at 12:30 a.m., Saturday, June 9, according to Walter Kimble, chief stationary engineer, who remained on site.

By 2:40 a.m., the lower level of the garage was completely submerged. He had already switched off electricity because he realized the rest of the garage might flood. "But in the history of the City of Houston, we'd never had level P-1 completely flood."

Still Mr. Kimble decided to relocate all cars to the top deck. It was not to be.

"It happened so fast. It was like a wave coming in," he said of the water that inundated level P-1 shortly thereafter.

Actually, he was driving toward the exit when suddenly the floor of level P-1 lifted, and water from below sprouted up. Water then poured in from the bayou, stair wells, drainage system


and electrical conduits until the entire garage was filled with water.

"I could hear the concrete breaking and the steel straining," said Mr. Kimble, who ran for his life after the garage floor shifted.

He stayed in contact with management and co-workers the entire time, but no one was able to make it into downtown at that hour. A few hours later, help arrived and BSD's cleanup efforts began.

The story of dedication continues. Late Friday evening, June 29, as this writer was leaving work, Design & Construction Division Inspector Joe Davis was noticed on level P-2, overseeing crews shore up the lower level of CHA's garage. When asked how long he would be there, he responded, "I'll be here as long as they [work crews] are here. It's the job."

That as his wife lay in a hospital. On Sunday, July 1, he was still at his post.

"This speaks to the level of commitment of our staff," said Monique McGilbra, department director. "Like the recent flood waters, there seems no depth to it." 

*Inside BSD Today...
Can you guess the man
with the pretty-but-mas-
culine hands? Page 3*



MAYOR
Lee P. Brown

Director
Monique McGilbra

Editor
Mignette Y. Dorsey

Point of View



Monique McGilbra
Director

Last year, I began by welcoming facilities maintenance employees from the Houston Police and Health & Human Services Departments.

Now I am pleased to welcome the employees joining us from the Houston Fire Department. This consolidation became effective July 1st, and raises the total number of Building Services employees to over 300.

Each year brings at least one event that leaves an indelible memory. Tropical Storm Allison was such an event. It will be remembered as the storm that devastated our city like no other before it. It disrupted the lives of more than 39 BSD employees, including mine. Those of us who received water in our homes know firsthand how easily material possessions can be destroyed.

While I am saddened by the adversity the storm brought on a personal level, I am uplifted when I consider the unselfishness of the department as a whole. Our's is a department that took action even before the rain began. After the flood waters abated, we quickly switched into recovery mode.

I want to express my appreciation to all of you who contributed to the BSD Disaster Relief Effort. As we smile at family photos decorating our work spaces, let us recall the members of our department family forced to discard water-soaked family heirlooms. The Employee Assistance Program can help during these stressful times: 713-866-4242.

Donations need not be monetary. Employees may donate vacation hours to flood victims via the City of Houston's Natural Disaster Vacation Donation Program. See Jane Cheeks or Lula Nelson for details.

From this disaster emerged a new section in the Administrative Services Division: The

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CAPS Grads Have Reason To Smile



Others turned out to support the May 10 graduating class. From l. to r.: Ricardo Sanchez, Georgia Lewis, Mike Houston, Carletta Dirden, David Cox, Constance Caldwell, Larry Baker, Tammy Blankenship, Jacquelyn Nisby, Steve Girardi, Monique McGilbra, Jane Cheeks and Richard Vella.

Building Services Department managers have wasted little time taking advantage of the City Accreditation Program for Supervisors. The program has graduated more than 14 BSD employees since January 2001.

CAPS was instituted two years ago by the Human Resources Department's Training Division. The program is comprised of six modules covering time and attendance, performance management, health and safety, hiring processes, requisitions and petty cash and administrative procedures.


BSD graduates in 2001 include: Kenneth Dever, Rodolfo Giron, Michael Houston, Kent Twyman, Carlos Garcia, Lisa Hicks, Colleen McNeese, Keith Phillips, Constance Caldwell, David Cox, Carletta Dirden, Venkatesh Nagasandra, Ricardo Sanchez and Richard Vella. 

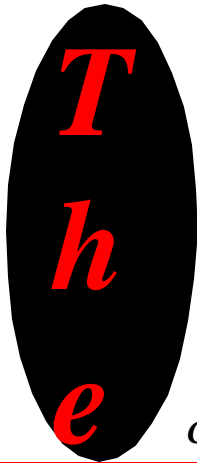
BSD Responds to Request for Blood

The Building Services Department never lacks individuals willing to give of themselves. Twenty-three employees volunteered to donate blood in the wake of Tropical Storm Allison at the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center. Of the 23 employees, 17 donated blood with 14 being first-time donors. The 23 employees were: Ronald Banks, Fausto Ayala, Larry Gowen, Willie Busby, Jr., Wayne Phipps, Luis Garza, Arquimimdes Joya, Martin Vallejo, Maria Guerrero, Deborah Cole,



Above, Melissa Aguirre is shown donating blood.

Krystal Larry, James Hanks, Robert Berry, Boyd Mendenhall, Joseph Davis, Valery Peters-Berry, Melissa Aguirre, Beatrice Hurst, Alvin Watts, Wayne Gaudin, Thomas Chesley, Richard Lewis and Gustavo Munoz. 



Client's Corner

Our featured client is the Houston Police Department. Naturally, the consolidation of HPD's Facility Management Division with Building Services' Property Management Division ushered in new management and procedures. In this issue Chief Bradford reflects on what the consolidation meant to him, his former employees, and what it brought to HPD in terms of service.

Q) Why did you support the consolidation of your Facilities Management Division with BSD?

A) Clearly, HPD ought to be dealing with public safety kinds of issues. I don't have the education, training or experience to deal with buildings and facilities. It was a matter of allowing the people with the proper skills to deal with these issues. I thought it was a great idea when the Mayor came up with the Building Services Department. We have 560,000 square feet of space and 26 floors. I don't know anything about elevator shafts, plumbing, electrical issues.

Q) Are you happy with the maintenance of your facilities since BSD has assumed this responsibility?

A) Yes. I have seen improvements in some areas, and some people have admitted to me that they are happier. They went from being apprehensive to fearful to downright, "I don't want to go." Yet I have not had a single employee unhappy that they were transferred. Others are saying, "I'm truly enjoying it." One person who had been charged with staying here [in HPD] came in and asked me if they could be transferred to BSD.

Q) What are the problems you have noticed? Is it more difficult to report a maintenance problem and get results?

A) I haven't noticed any problems. I have noticed improvements. As an example, we see employees now working together to help pool issues. Before, employees were assigned certain floors. Now I see a more consolidated work effort. I have noticed an improvement in the response time to get things done.

Q) To what extent has the consolidation freed your staff to focus on public safety as opposed to facilities maintenance issues?

A) I had a police sergeant and an assistant chief who pretty much devoted their full-time efforts to facilities issues. Now the sergeant

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C.O. "Brad" Bradford
Chief of Police

Man, he's got nails!



Martin Vallejo, a supervisor at the Drew Street Facility, has had long nails his entire 26 years with the City.

Never tell Martin Vallejo that his nails get in the way.

"I use them as screwdrivers," said Vallejo, who supervises the painters and carpenters at BSD's Drew Street Facility.

Vallejo attributes the growth of his healthy, clean and extremely hard nails to the meat he eats. Steak and barbecue are his staples. He admits to cutting them off in early May, but says he rarely files them.

"But sometimes when we're sanding furniture, if there's a hang nail, I brush it across the sandpaper."

Technicalities

by Kent Twyman
LAN Specialist

Within the next few weeks, the Enterprise Messaging Team will be implementing email mailbox size limits. The limitations will be imposed in order to maintain a suitable amount of available disk space for recovery and to help baseline the email servers.

Once the size limits have been determined and applied to each user's mailbox, any mailbox exceeding certain thresholds will be restricted from receiving or sending email until enough messages are deleted to reduce it to a size less than the predetermined threshold. You will receive warnings stating that you are reaching the maximum mailbox size limit before actually being restricted from sending and receiving email.

The size of each mailbox is determined by the size of all of the folders in the mailbox collectively and not just the size of the **"Inbox" folder**. It is recommended that you **start deleting any messages that you no longer need**. It is also very important to delete these messages from your "Deleted Items" folder in Outlook as well. To do so, open your "Deleted Items" folder, highlight the message to delete, click on "Edit" from the top menu bar, then select "Delete." Outlook will verify that you want to permanently delete the message. Click "Yes" if you wish to permanently delete the message.

To determine the current size of your mailbox, right-click on the topmost folder in the "Folder List" view. This folder will be called "Outlook Today - [Mailbox - user name]". After you right-click on this folder, click on "Properties for..." at the bottom of the dropdown menu. You will then need to click on the "Folder Size..." button on the bottom left hand side of the Mailbox properties page. You will be able to view the size of each folder in your mailbox as well as the Total Size of the mailbox.


It is also recommended that you create archive files or .PST files to store email

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P r o files

Our Employee Awards Ceremony in May was a smash. Held in the Wortham Center's Grand Foyer, dozens of honorees dined on a catered breakfast. Our director, Monique McGilbra, also took the opportunity to unveil BSD's recently-produced public service announcement: "Building for Houston."

Emcees Mignette Dorsey and Tracy Whitehead presented Service Awards to personnel with 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 years of employment, and Perfect Attendance Awards to dozens. There were also presentations for Divisional Awards and, of course, the Employee of the Year grand slam. A collective congratulations to all the recipients!

A pictorial spread highlighting the May event along with photos of various Employee of the Month recipients follows on pages 4 and 5. Photos courtesy of Gerald Milligan and Mignette Y. Dorsey. 



Stephany Orr, center, Employee of the Year for Administrative Services and the entire Department; also Employee of the Month for June 2001.

Tom Corner, second from right, Employee of the Year and Best Supervisor for Security Management Division.



James Hernandez, right and center, Employee of the Year and Best Supervisor for Property Management Division.



Yvonne Stafford, second from left, Employee of the Year and Best Team Player for Design & Construction Division.



Issa Dadoush, center, Employee of the Month for January 2001 and Best Supervisor for Design and Construction Division.

Maria Guerrero, below and center, Employee of the Month for March 2001.



Scheherazade T. Williams, below and second from right, Employee of the Month for February 2001.




Tan Badar, Employee of the Month for May 2001.

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Safety & Emergency Management Section, staffed by Ted Low, safety coordinator, and Wayne Ashworth, safety representative and a former paramedic. Both have been invaluable in putting into operation emergency procedures.

Finally, as the City works to repair our parking structures, please consider alternative transportation options. If you work downtown, contact BSD's Hope Rodriguez for information on obtaining free METRO bus passes. Walking and bicycling are also options for those who live in close proximity to their work sites.

June has not been the best month, but we have become better citizens because of it. 

Safety

First!

Ted Low
Safety Coordinator

Ted Low's column features an excerpt from "Flood of Emotions ... Will It Ever End?" by Michael C. Heil, Extension Assistant, Rural Mental Health Project, Kansas State University, Cooperative Extension Service.

People go through different phases in response to natural disaster. Tropical Storm Allison's victims may experience one or more of the following:

Heroic Phase—People respond to demands to save their own and others' lives and property. A great deal of energy is expended helping others survive and recover.

Honeymoon Phase—Those who have survived have a strong sense of having shared and lived through a catastrophic experience with others. People feel supported and encouraged by official agencies that promise assistance. The cleanup process begins with anticipation that more help will be available.

Disillusionment Phase—If promises of aid are not fulfilled as expected, strong feelings of anger, resentment, and bitterness may occur. There may be a gradual loss of the "shared community" as victims concentrate on rebuilding on their own. People may feel isolated and communities can become divided and hostile.

Reconstruction Phase—Victims have come to realize that they need to rebuild their own lives with little assistance from others. They have gradually assumed responsibility for the tasks. Signs of progress are evident. Community groups with long-term investment in the community become key elements.

With a lot of work and time, the effects of the flood will grow more distant and there will be signs of continued caring and healing in the community.

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is reassigned to focus on police functions. The assistant chief is focusing most of his time on other duties.

Q) What feedback have you received from your former employees who are now a part of BSD?

A) The worst anyone has said is, "Well, it's okay." And I consider that to be pretty good.

Q) What were your greatest concerns in telling your employees that some of them would be transferred to a new department?

A) How would BSD and HPD manage the change? How would we convey to the employees, in an effective manner, that the change would be something positive for them? When you approach people with seniority and tell them that they will be transferred, that's like ripping their hearts out. And what happened? The two departments worked together and implemented a smooth transition. I have to commend Monique McGilbra and the entire BSD staff because the transition went smoothly. Very seldom does HPD give up employees. This was a reverse for HPD.

Q) How were you able to convince reluctant personnel that this was the best thing for them?

A) By sitting down talking to Monique McGilbra and making sure we had an understanding of the need to communicate to the employees what would happen. Then I had one-on-one meetings [with HPD personnel] every Wednesday at 1:30 P.M. I would also stop employees in the hallways and talk to them. Hey, a new department means new positions, new opportunities. So we painted the picture that there would be new opportunities and that they would not lose any benefits. Small things like they still have their HPD identification badges [made a difference].

Q) What do you think about such consolidations where the maintenance staff is permitted to work in the same locations where they always have?

A) These are professional employees who come in and do a very good job everyday. It doesn't so much matter who their boss is,

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Department kudos and news briefs



Mayor Lee P. Brown and Harry Gee unveil the Sister Cities display.

Hats off to Steve Girardi, Walter Kimble and Paul Marro. They assisted the Mayor's Protocol Office and the City Hall Preservation Committee in the installation of the Sister Cities display outside City Hall Council Chambers. They managed the removal of the stone on the wall, relocated light switches and gave access to the graphics company that eventually installed the plaque.


Congrats to Paul Prado for recently earning his "Professional in Human Resources" certification. Kudos to Mary Taylor-Ross and Anthony Freddie who serve as officers for the National Forum for Black Public Administrators.

Both the Property Management, Maintenance & Operations and the Loss Prevention Divisions have undergone name changes. They have been renamed the Property Maintenance and the Security Management Divisions respectively.

BSD personnel are asked to remember Donnie Reed who suffered an automobile accident in April. Mr. Reed remains comatose. Contact Susan McCoy (713-308-3903) to make donations on behalf of his family. Our collective sympathy is also expressed to Brenda J. Smith in the loss of her mother, Mrs. Hilda Pearl Smith.

Four employees have retired since December 2000: Eddie Paul, Pamela West, Reuben Sherman and Miriam G. Feldman. We will miss you all!

Managers are asked to support the Employee of the Month Program by submitting nomination letters to Jane Cheeks by the 5th of each month. Employees are asked to support the Employee Comment/Suggestion Program by submitting ideas to Carletta Dirden in a "confidential" envelope. Employees whose suggestions are chosen by the Director will be rewarded.

Thanks to the following for administering the BSD Holiday Adopt-a-Family program: Lula Nelson, Kathy Vaughn, Maria Guerrero, Miriam Feldman and Melissa Aguirre. 

BSD Handles 3-1-1 Facility Design, Renovation

As the City of Houston's in-house developer, Building Services fulfilled its role in the renovation of the soon-to-come 3-1-1 service center. Headquartered on the 5th floor of 611 Walker, the call center is the City's solution to separating service/non-emergency-type calls from emergency calls typically handled by 9-1-1 operators.




"It is a treasured opportunity to be part of a project from start to finish," said BSD Director Monique McGilbra. "The 3-1-1 call center renovation illustrates perfectly our department's function as delineated by Mayor Brown upon our inception."

Divisional teamwork was key. BSD's Design & Construction Division (D&C) managed design drawings and specifications for the spacial layout and mechanical upgrades. The Property Management Division (PM) connected all feeds (conduits) from the 5th floor to the generator in the 611 Walker garage. PM implemented the design drawings and constructed the offices and spacial layout for the 3-1-1 call takers. Special furniture ordered from overseas was outfitted with a custom electrical system. D&C designed it; PM installed it. D&C also designed the Uninterrupted Power System (UPS) and PM installed it. By managing the project in-house, BSD saved the City more than \$70,000.

"Calvin Wells and his Strategic Purchasing staff also helped tremendously on this project," confirmed Richard Vella, D&C Division Manager for the 3-1-1 project.

BSD staff involved in the renovation of the 3-1-1 call center space are listed by division. **Administration Services:** Monique McGilbra, Jane Cheeks, Danny Gonzales, Angela Jackson; **Design & Construction:** Trinh Pham, Richard Vella, Paul Nicosia, Barry Morgenstern, Bill Reesby, Authur Wagner; **Property Management:** Larry Baker, Donnie Battenfield, Paul Marro, Martin Vallejo and his staff of painters and carpenters, Lynwood Delphin, Ron Banks, David Ashby, James Hanks. (Trinh Pham and Paul Nicosia both recently resigned.)

Expect the call center's rollout in coming months. 

No Such Thing as Electronic Privacy

Did you know that ALL email, received and sent, from a City computer is the property of the City of Houston? While frivolous emails are discouraged, sending messages containing offensive, abusive, threatening, or other similar language is strictly prohibited. Sending sexually oriented messages or images is also prohibited and may result in disciplinary action. Also be aware that your emails are subject to the Texas Public Information Act, meaning any citizen may request to see your received, saved or deleted electronic correspondence via an Open Records request. Only business-related usage of this communication system is therefore encouraged.

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but they like being in this building because it meets their personal needs. So it provided stress relief when they knew they could continue to work at their existing locations. And it did not require a new training curve for those who work in sensitive areas. BSD's allowing those same employees to work here was helpful to those employees as well as to me as chief of police.

Q) Does that [working in their same locations] allow for a smoother transition, or does the chain of command become more blurred for the employees?

A) I think they still see me as a resource, that I'm still there, particularly those with 15 or 20 years with HPD. My door is still open to them, and it think it should be to any of them. I know their wives, their children.

Q) How do you feel about being interviewed on this subject for an article slated to run in a City publication?

A) I think it's important for those employees who have experienced this smooth transition and for those who are now saying, "It's great." It feels good to be able to say, "I told you so." I think it's also good for those who will be a part of the future facilities BSD will acquire and need firsthand information about the transition. In the long run, I think we will be able to save money and get efficient and effective use of our resources.

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messages for future reference. These files can be saved to your local hard drive or to the network. If you wish to open these files, you can do so by adding a "Personal Folder" in Outlook and selecting the .PST file you previously saved. The "Personal Folder" size does not affect any mailbox size limitations on the Exchange Servers.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact Kent Twyman, (713)437-6586; Yusuf Ali, (713)437-6823; or Robert Williams, (713)221-0439.

Energy Concerns

Gus Asmar
Energy Engineer

To conserve energy is to conserve dollars. Reduce your monthly electricity bill, without sacrificing comfort or convenience, by following these guidelines:

Lighting. Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) were introduced in the 1980's. The new advanced CFLs use about 75 percent less energy than incandescent (INC) lights and last up to 10 times longer. CFLs emit the same amount of light as standard incandescent bulbs. For CFL retrofits use the following equivalency guide: a) 40 WINC à 15 WCFL; b) 60 WINC à 20 WCFL; c) 75 WINC à 23 WCFL; and, d) 100 WINC à 27 WCFL. Based on 6,000 hours at \$0.10 kWh, this strategy would save at least \$25.00 in energy costs over the life of each CFL. For outdoor lighting, use either CFLs or high-pressure sodium light fixtures which have long lives. The outdoor security lighting system is to be used in conjunction with light-sensing controls to turn the lights on at dusk and off at dawn.

Central air conditioning. The efficiency of central air conditioners is measured by the Seasonal Efficiency Ratio (SEER). The higher the SEER, the more efficient the unit. If you are considering buying a new air conditioner, the new A/C unit must have a SEER rating of at least 13. A four-ton unit with a SEER of 13 costs about \$605 annually to operate compared to about \$980 per year for a similar unit with a SEER of 8.0, an annual savings of \$375. In addition, make sure that the A/C unit is properly sized so that it will remove humidity effectively as it cools. A properly sized ENERGY STAR labeled central A/C unit can save up to 20% on the cooling bill. In sizing the air-conditioner, use the following measures: a) 100 – 150 sq.ft. à 5,000 Btu/hr; b) 250 – 300 sq.ft. à 7,000 Btu/hr; c) 350-400 sq.ft. à 9,000 Btu/hr; d) 450-550 sq.ft. à 12,000 Btu/hr.; and, e) 700 - 1000 sq.ft à 18,000 Btu/hr.

This is Part I of a II-part series. Look for tips related to insulation, home appliances and thermostats in the fall edition of BSD Today.


Houston Emergency Center Breaks Ground



Photos by Gerald Milligan

Construction is underway for the Houston Emergency Center, a state-of-the-art emergency communications facility to be located at 5320 N. Shepherd. The Center will serve as the new home for emergency dispatchers from the Houston Fire and Police Departments, as well as 9-1-1 Emergency Network call takers.

The city is expected to save more than \$7 million annually by consolidating the three operations, reorganizing personnel, and upgrading and standardizing existing dispatch and records management hardware and software. The new systems' most significant benefit will be the common protocol for interagency transaction exchange between 9-1-1, Police, Fire, EMS and Emergency Management. The system also includes interfaces for connections to State agencies, Harris County Sheriff's Department, METRO and TranStar.

The project is scheduled to be completed March, 2002. 



From left to right: Andy Schatte, Principal, The Keystone Group, Inc., BSD Director Monique McGilbra, Mayor Lee P. Brown, Chief C.O. Bradford, Houston Police Department, Laverne Hogan, Executive Director, Greater Harris County 911, Chief Chris Connealy, Houston Fire Department and Don Hollingsworth, Sr. Executive Assistant to the Mayor. The dignitaries broke ground on Jan. 30, 2001.

Quotables

"Tears are antifreeze for the soul."

Anonymous